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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "SOFT DRINKS FOR SUMMER." Facts from the Federal Food and Drug Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Homemakers, today's report from Washington is anything but dry. You can count on that, for our official correspondent with the Federal Food and Drug Administration is writing about summer beverages -- soft drinks, orangeades, limeades, pop. . . . all the popular drinks that are part of Fourth of July celebrations.

Now, what's the connection between a bottle of pop -- and the Federal Food and Drug Administration?

The answer: One of the duties of the Administration is to see that all non-alcoholic beverages, and beverage products, sold in interstate commerce, are safe and wholesome.

Every year, says our Washington reporter, the children of the United States, and a good many grown people too, use somewhere between eleven billion and fourteen billion half-pint bottles of soft drinks. Into these bottles go tons of sugar, and millions of pounds of fruit acid.

If you're really interested in figures -- big ones -- I can enlarge on the tons-of-sugar-in-soft-drinks theme. Besides the sugar and fruit acid I've just mentioned, our billions of bottles of soft drinks include 50 thousand pounds of harmless artificial color, a million gallons of flavoring extract, and 400 million gallons of carbonated water.

That's what it takes -- to quench our national thirst for soft drinks.

Mr. J. W. Sale, Chief Chemist in charge of the Beverage Laboratories in the Federal Food and Drug Administration, says that practically all non-alcoholic beverages belonging to the soft drink class consist of sugar sirup, carbonated water, and small quantities of other ingredients that make an attractive drink. The sugar sirup is usually made with cane or beet sugar, acidulated with fruit acids, such as citric and tartaric. The carbonated water gives the drink a pleasant, sharp taste, and the bubbles make it look refreshing.

Cola type beverages, in addition to these ingredients, may contain caffeine -- about 1/3 to 1/4 of the quantity of caffeine found in a cup of tea or coffee. The presence of caffeine in this type of beverage may or may not be declared in the labeling, depending upon State food law requirements. The Food and Drug Administration has no control over the labeling or wholesomeness of beverages sold locally, within a State. And if the caffeine is not declared on the label,



parents have no way of knowing whether or not the soft drinks their children buy contain caffeine, the active ingredient of tea and coffee.

Most soft drinks are colored. The colors used are the certified dyes -- harmless, and suitable for use in beverages and other foods. It doesn't take much coloring matter to color a soft drink; the ordinary seven-ounce bottle of artificially colored soda contains about three-hundredths of a grain of added coloring matter. That's about as much as you could put on the head of a pin.

The flavoring substances used in soft drinks include extracts taken from cloves, vanilla beans, and citrus fruit peel; and the seeds, roots, bark, stems and leaves of different plants.

Now -- along with your summer reading, don't forget that labels are sometimes as good as a detective story. Read the labels on beverage containers, and the statements on the metal crown caps, and you'll know whether you are getting a genuine fruit product, or an imitation. Also, the label will give you the "net contents" of the bottle -- so you'll know whether you are making an intelligent purchase, so far as your pocketbook is concerned.

Among the important summer beverages are the fruit juices. You can buy, in bottles or cans, the juice of apples, grapes, grapefruit, oranges, limes, lemons, loganberries, blackberries, pineapples, pomegranates, tomatoes -- even cabbage.

When you read the label, and see the names grapefruit juice, orange juice, grape juice, and so forth, and when these names are not accompanied by any other explanatory statement of the composition, you may be sure that the products are pure juices of the fruits named.

Sometimes you will see on the label: "Sugar Added." Fruits vary in sweetness, and it is customary to standardize the juices by adding sugar. And when sugar is added, you will find a plain statement on the label: "Sugar Added," or -- "Sweetened with Sugar."

Fruit juices are perishable. In order to prevent spoilage, it is necessary to pasteurize them, or to preserve them with chemical preservatives. Some manufacturers preserve their products with benzoate of soda, or sulphur dioxide. Neither one of these is prohibited under the Federal Food and Drugs Act, but if they are used, that fact must be declared on the label. Many people prefer food products without chemical preservatives in them, and those who do are entitled to know whether or not chemical preservatives have been used. They may get this information by reading the label.

Homemakers interested in learning more about the beverages they buy for their families may send for a publication mentioned before in these reports from the Food and Drug Administration -- SERVICE AND REGULATORY ANNOUNCEMENTS -- FOOD AND DRUG NO. 2. This leaflet contains definitions for fruit juice, for grape juice, for orange and tomato juice; and for other popular beverages, including ginger ale, sarsaparilla, and root beer.

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